in position 116 ($VEGF_{189}$), and another longer form with an insertion of 41 amino acids ($VEGF_{206}$), which includes the 24 amino acid insertion found in $VEGF_{189}$, are also known. $VEGF_{121}$ and $VEGF_{165}$ are soluble proteins. $VEGF_{189}$ and $VEGF_{206}$ appear to be mostly cell-associated. All of the versions of VEGF are biologically active.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 18 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Male Sprague-Dawley rats were anesthetized with an intraperitoneal injection of sodium pentobarbital (50 mg/kg). A longitudinal incision was made in the right thigh, after which the right femoral artery was surgically excised to induce limb ischemia. Rats were then transduced with rAAV-$hVEGF_{165}$ (2×10^{13} virions; n=8) via intramuscular injection at sites within the ischemic hindlimb and also at sites within the contralateral limb. The vector suspension (100 μL/site) was injected into 4 different sites in the major thigh muscles (quadriceps and adductor). Three rats received sham operations for preliminary assessment of hemodynamic examination. To confirm VEGF expression and to assess the possibility that VEGF was expressed in remote tissues, reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) was performed. Gene expression at the mRNA level was evaluated by RT-PCR. Total cellular RNA of muscle tissues and remote tissues (e.g., brain, heart, liver, spleen, kidney, testes) was isolated using RNA STAT-60 (TET-TEST, Inc., Friendswood, Tex.). Extracted RNA was treated with DNase I (Takara Shuzo Co., Tokyo, Japan) to eliminate DNA contamination. The synthesis of first-strand cDNA was performed under conditions recommended in the ProSTAR First Strand RT-PCR kit (Stratagene, La Jolla, Calif.). The PCR amplifications were performed using human VEGF-specific primers (sense: 5'-GAGGGCAGAATCATCACGAAGT-3' (SEQ ID NO:3); antisense: 5'-CCACCTTCTTGATGTCATCA-3') (SEQ ID NO:4). GAPDH mRNA served as an internal standard. The PCR products were electrophoresed on ethidium bromide-stained 2.0% agarose gels. VEGF gene expression was observed 4 and 10 weeks after injection

spleen, kidney, and testes in rAAV-hVEGF$_{165}$-treated rats 4 weeks after injection (FIG. 4).--